

**RENFREW COUNTY
NATIONAL FARMERS UNION**
Dave Mackay, President
Telephone: 613-582-7379 or 613-649-8211

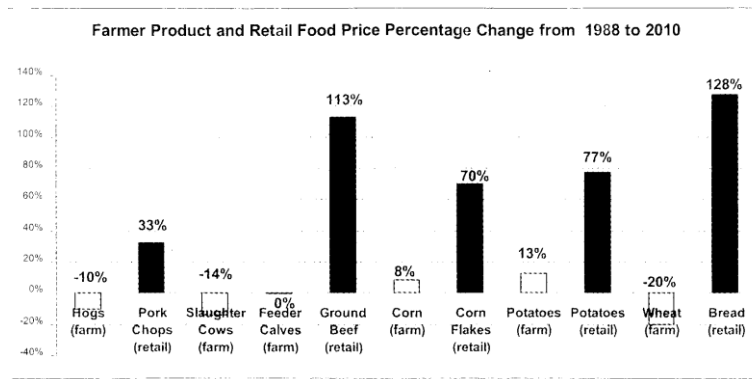
This summer as usual there were many agricultural related issues for Renfrew County National Farmers Union to address.

Endangered Species Act: A number of local farmers and residents expressed deep concern over the cumbersome Endangered Species Legislation which is in the process of being implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources. It has been stated that there is a greater concern over the loss of endangered species in areas of Ontario where agriculture is more intensive. Renfrew County farmers in the NFU recently sent a letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Minister of Agriculture (Prov.) outlining “it is obvious that when the family farm is protected then most of the endangered species (species which don’t cause damage to crops) are protected. Two Renfrew County farmers graciously donated photos and evidence how they protected certain species this summer. One farmer, during corn planting, observed a killdeer’s nest, left the local area near the nest untouched to allow for the hatching of the eggs. Another farmer, when cutting his hayfield, observed a harrier’s nest and also left the area concealed with standing hay to allow for the young harriers to survive. Given the above evidence the letter requested the Government of Ontario and the Ministry of Natural Resources to incorporate the following two recommendations into the Species at Risk Regulations:

- 1) In order to protect the species at risk, the family farm must also be protected. Policy makers at all levels must come to the terms that the family farm is the best custodian of the environment, the water and plant/animal species!
- 2) The implementation of the regulations under the Endangered Species Act must not create financial hardship and/or costly delays for private property owners.

Land Grabbing: Farmers in Renfrew County should remain vigilant. In countries around the world, including Canada, investor corporations and foreign entities are buying up farmland. Canadian farmers financially weakened by an ongoing farm income crisis in certain commodities are easily outbid for land by corporations and by investors looking for safe financial havens in uncertain economic times. If corporations or wealthy investors take control of our land and farms, our food systems and ecosystems will be seriously damaged. Luckily it appears that the traditional model of farm ownership still exists in all of Renfrew County. This NFU report, “Losing Our Grip: How a Corporate Farmland Buy-Up Threaten Family Farms and Food Sovereignty” is available on-line at www.nfu.ca/land_report or by calling 613-649-8211, a very worthwhile read.

Cash Advance Repayment Extension For Hog and Cattle Farmers: This announcement is certainly a welcome for those farmers in Renfrew County. However, as farmers we have to keep reminding the Canadian governments that action is needed to ensure farmers across Canada receive a fair price for their animals. Packers own cattle in feedlots (captive supply) to maintain low prices. In Canada two firms control 80 percent of the beef packing industry. Cattle prices adjusted for inflation are as low as the 1930’s while the number of cattle farms is at its lowest level in 80 years. We encourage farmers to discuss this issue with your elected officials as well as pointing out the discrepancies to your consumer friends. The following graph will better outline that discrepancy between the price the consumer pays and the returns to the farm (producer). Retail prices have climbed. Ground beef and bread prices have more than doubled since 1988. Farm product prices have declined or remained flat.



Prison Farm Update: By now everyone is aware the Prison Farm Campaign of which the NFU, other farm organizations, many interested groups and consumers were a part of, lost their efforts to save the Frontenac Prison Institution. A well established holstein herd of 300 cows and young animals was removed from the facility against the wishes of many on August 9th. A poll done by the Globe and Mail in December of 2009 showed 92% of the respondents in favour of keeping the prison farms open. We certainly had the general public on our side. The August 9th removal of the dairy cows from the Frontenac Institution again illustrates this country's short-sighted policies on farming, food justice and locally grown healthy food and the loss of valuable agricultural lands. We certainly wish to sincerely thank everyone, and especially our local farm organizations in Renfrew County for supporting this campaign. It was a valuable experience.

Local Food: Again Renfrew County NFU congratulates all the organizers of Local Food Events. This summer we noted more local food (and Product of Ontario) on display in local grocery outlets. One must recognize that local food contains much more nutritional value. Please compliment your local food suppliers. This is a positive step which enhances family run fruit and vegetable growers to survive for the benefit of all consumers.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement CETA: Renfrew County farmers should take note of the clauses contained in this agreement which is proposed to be in place sometime in 2011. In addition we wish to advise those farmers in the coming months the NFU may be asking you for help as the NFU works with other organizations to push back on those clauses which could affect supply management and the ability to save and use locally grown seeds.

<u>UPCOMING NFU MEETINGS</u>	
(Everyone welcome)	
Sept. 6, 2010	Barr Line Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 4, 2010	Barr Line Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 1, 2010	Barr Line Community Centre 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 6, 2010	Barr Line Community Centre 7:30 p.m.